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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 8th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on 9 October 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

Contents

Agenda item 58: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*)*

Agenda item 59: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)*

Agenda item 60: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (*continued*)*

Agenda item 61: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)*

Agenda item 62: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*)*

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 58: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. V and XIII) and A/72/62)

Agenda item 59: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. VI and XIII))

Agenda item 60: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. VII and XIII) and A/72/69)

Agenda item 61: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/72/66/Rev.1 and A/72/66/Add.1)

Agenda item 62: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. VIII, IX, X, XI and XIII), A/72/74 and A/72/346)

1. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that 57 years since the adoption of the Declaration on decolonization, some 17 Territories were still awaiting the decolonization called for in that document. Any colonial process was a denial of fundamental human rights, was contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, and constituted a threat to international peace and security. Argentina had defended and would continue to defend the right to self-determination of peoples in all cases where that principle applied. Colonized peoples had the right to choose freely their future political status. At the same time, the administering Powers had the obligation to collaborate with the Special Committee.

2. Nevertheless, the principle of self-determination was not absolute and must not be used as a pretext for violating the territorial integrity of existing States. General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) had characterized the question of the Malvinas Islands as a special and particular colonial situation, and had recognized the existence of a sovereignty dispute over the issue which could be resolved only through negotiations between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom, with due regard for the interests of the inhabitants of the islands.

3. The principle of self-determination did not apply to the existing inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands, since they had not been subjected to alien subjugation, domination or exploitation, as reflected in numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly after debate in the Special Committee from 1965 onwards. The existing inhabitants of the islands were British or descendants of the British settlers who had arrived on the islands as part of their country's colonization plans. Furthermore, in paragraph 197 of its most recent Ministerial Declaration, the Group of 77 and China had recalled the principle of territorial integrity with specific reference to the Argentine case.

4. Those resolutions left no doubt as to the bilateral nature of the question of the Malvinas Islands. Argentina and the United Kingdom had held substantive negotiations and had made compromises and concessions, in which the United Kingdom had agreed to recognize Argentine sovereignty over the Islands. Unfortunately, those proposals had never been implemented, despite the request by the General Assembly that the Secretary-General should use his good offices to that end.

5. The bilateral nature of the dispute did not in any way imply that the inhabitants of the islands would be ignored or required to change their way of life. On the contrary, the National Constitution of the Republic of Argentina established the commitment of all Argentines to respect the way of life of the islanders. In parallel with the negotiations relating to sovereignty, special discussions had been held between Argentina and the United Kingdom on practical issues relating to the well-being of the islanders. Consequently, Argentina had been able to establish regular air and sea transport services and postal, telegraph and telephone communications, and had assisted the inhabitants of the islands in areas such as health, education, agriculture and technology.

6. The 1982 conflict had broken out when Argentina was governed by a military dictatorship and had cost the lives of hundreds of Argentine and British citizens, who should be remembered and honoured. That conflict in no way altered the legal nature of the dispute, much less resolved it. The parties had been urged to resume bilateral negotiations not only by the General Assembly but also by various regional, biregional and multilateral organizations or forums.

7. Since President Macri had taken office in December 2015, a new phase in relations with the United Kingdom had begun and the two Governments had decided to deepen cooperation in areas of mutual interest. A joint communiqué issued in September 2016 reflected the political will of the parties to examine and work on all South Atlantic issues, without exclusion, under the formula on sovereignty that preserved Argentine rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The two Governments had thus been able to agree on requesting the International Committee of the Red Cross to send a team of forensic experts to identify the unknown Argentine soldiers buried in the Darwin Cemetery in the Malvinas Islands. The experts' final report was expected in the following months.

8. In view of that constructive spirit, Argentina exhorted the Government of the United Kingdom to cease unilateral acts in the disputed area in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/49. Renewing its commitment to the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes, Argentina expressed confidence that the new climate in relations with the United Kingdom would be conducive to the negotiation of a solution to the long-standing dispute over sovereignty.

9. **Ms. Challenger** (Antigua and Barbuda) said that her country knew the ravages caused by natural disasters and stood shoulder-to-shoulder with all those suffering similar experiences.

10. As more than half of the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories were in the Caribbean, greater attention was needed to address decolonization in that region. At their January 2017 meeting in the Dominican Republic, her Government had joined the other Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in pledging to continue working within the framework of international law to ensure that Latin America and the Caribbean were free of colonialism.

11. As the end of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism approached, Antigua and Barbuda continued its commitment to that goal, and stood in solidarity with its brothers near and far to defeat the scourge of colonialism. As a small island developing State, her country knew what it was to be left behind. The time had come to give the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories the opportunity to engage fully in seeking a solution.

12. As a friend of both Argentina and the United Kingdom, her country had repeatedly urged the two parties to resume sovereignty negotiations in order to reach without delay a peaceful and definitive solution to the question of the Malvinas Islands, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 31/49.

13. With respect to the dispute over the Sahara, her delegation supported the ongoing political process taking place under the exclusive auspices of the Secretary-General and had full confidence in the facilitation mission to be carried out by his newly-appointed Personal Envoy.

14. Antigua and Barbuda would continue to stand by the guiding principles and practices set forth in the Charter and relevant General Assembly resolutions. Political, economic, human and security concerns must remain at the forefront of all negotiations. Her country remained committed to the complete and immediate eradication of colonialism in all its forms and appealed to all stakeholders to continue to work for the improvement of human rights and the economic and social development of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

15. **Mr. Llorentty Soliz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that his country was fully committed to the implementation of the Declaration and rejected any act that sought to silence the liberating voice of the peoples in their struggle for a world free from colonialism. Their freedom must be achieved through multilateral mechanisms with the participation of the international community and through horizontal political dialogue with a view to safeguarding international peace and security.

16. His delegation supported the aspirations of the people of Puerto Rico to become a free State and demanded immediate implementation of the process leading to its independence from United States colonialism, to ensure the full, effective exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in conformity with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

17. Bolivia welcomed the rightful liberation on 17 May 2017 of Oscar López Rivera, who had been unjustly imprisoned in United States penitentiaries for 35 years and eight months, and expressed the hope that Puerto Rico would soon return to the Latin American and Caribbean family of nations.

18. The United Kingdom had complied with none of the more than 40 resolutions relating to the question of the Malvinas Islands adopted since 1965 by the United Nations. His delegation believed that the United Kingdom had the obligation to engage promptly, formally and in good faith in negotiations within the framework of international law in order to return the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas to Argentine sovereignty.

19. His delegation reiterated its call for an immediate end to the expansionist, colonial policy of Israel, which persistently violated the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and blatantly contravened the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the illegal construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and reaffirmed its support for the self-determination of the Palestinian people and their right to a free, sovereign and independent State with pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

20. Lastly, his delegation was firmly committed to supporting, in the relevant forums, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which was still seeking to exercise its right to self-determination. He trusted that through negotiation, a just, lasting and mutually-acceptable political solution would lead to self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, in accordance with the principles and purposes set forth in the Charter and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

21. **Ms. Sughayar** (Jordan) said that the fact that many peoples continued to languish under occupation called for consideration not only of the requirements for living in dignity and independence but also of how the Organization could implement the principles of the Charter concerning respect for human rights and dignity and equality of all peoples. The situation of the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories should be examined within the framework of the reform of the Organization, prioritizing a new dialogue that would lead to a just solution to all problems of the colonial Territories, taking account of historical, political and administrative factors. Granting independence to colonial countries and peoples was a basic pillar for the realization of international peace and security. Indeed, many current threats resulted from the oppression of people and deprivation of their rights. The core causes of such problems should be further discussed. More than simply refugees, internally displaced persons, or disputes over territories and borders, the issue at stake was upholding the basic principles of justice and of granting people their rights.

22. Any imbalance in commitments under international law and international cooperation must be avoided. Respecting the right of people to exercise sovereignty over their Territories and exploit their natural resources freely would help them to integrate into the international economy.

23. Jordan renewed its call for fact-finding missions to be sent to Non-Self-Governing Territories to assess their political, economic and social situations and their current needs. United Nations agencies should play an increased role in the Territories, providing technical assistance and guaranteeing the enjoyment by the people of their rights under international agreements.

24. The core issue of concern in the Middle East was the need to end the Israeli occupation of Palestine and to establish a free, independent and viable State of Palestine in accordance with international resolutions, based on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. The United Nations must guarantee, through the practical implementation of resolutions, the protection of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and of all other peoples under occupation, and freedom from all racist practices or exploitation.

25. Her delegation called on all parties to the dispute over Western Sahara to further cooperate and engage in dialogue without preconditions and in good faith, with a view to reaching a definitive, consensual solution that would take into account the concerns of the inhabitants of the Western Sahara. The Moroccan proposal for regional autonomy, already submitted to the Security Council, deserved serious consideration. She hoped that the good offices and mediation of the newly-appointed Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General would bring about a rapprochement and enhance confidence-building measures between the parties. Her delegation valued the efforts and reforms undertaken by the Kingdom of Morocco to develop Western Sahara, as well as the recent measures to enable the Sahrawis to engage in national political life by participating in legislative elections.

26. The Organization's basic role of granting independence to Non-Self-Governing Territories must be associated with a real desire by all parties to ensure the implementation of the Declaration by the end of the

Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

27. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that the growing instability and insecurity in the Sahel and surrounding regions made tackling the long-standing conflict in Western Sahara a matter of urgency, with the further integration of the Maghreb also being at stake. He encouraged the parties to the conflict to begin genuine negotiations, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, to work out an acceptable compromise and a definitive political solution. Since neither party could expect to have all its demands met, they should settle for a negotiated, mutually-acceptable political solution, based on realism and a spirit of compromise, as recommended by the Security Council in its recently-adopted resolution 2351 (2017).

28. His delegation welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and supported him fully in his facilitation mission. He encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to strive for improved relations between the parties concerned.

29. The conflict in Western Sahara should be tackled as part of a broader regional strategy for the Sahel, the regional dimension being vital in any approach to the problem. Thus, the Personal Envoy should step up his contacts with other countries in the region and with subregional organizations, in order to promote ownership of the issue at the subregional level. He should also encourage the political and economic dynamic under way in the Sahara. The parties directly concerned should work unceasingly, availing themselves of the good offices of the Secretary-General in order to reach a just, lasting and mutually-acceptable political settlement. Burundi reiterated its support for the Secretary-General's efforts and the relevant United Nations resolutions on the issue of Western Sahara.

30. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the theme of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, which sought to place people at the heart of the concerns of the United Nations, underscored the responsibility of the international community vis-à-vis the anxiety felt by people in many countries. Creating a peaceful global-security environment would help to reduce areas of persistent tension.

31. His country continued to follow the Sahara issue closely, and encouraged the parties to the conflict to pursue their efforts to reach a just, lasting and mutually-acceptable political solution in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Secretary-General's efforts to relaunch the negotiation process and to promote a framework for dialogue were commendable and should be pursued. He congratulated the incoming Personal Envoy for his genuine dedication to his new duties and willingness to visit the Sahara region.

32. The delegation of Cote d'Ivoire welcomed the efforts by the Kingdom of Morocco, described by the Security Council as serious and credible, to reach a political settlement of the dispute through the proposal for broad regional autonomy within the framework of the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Morocco. The Moroccan initiative was based on international law and on arrangements consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

33. By inviting neighbouring States to cooperate more fully with the United Nations and become involved in the process, the Council demonstrated its determination to reach a comprehensive and lasting solution, bearing in mind the interests of all the peoples of the region. That approach would, undoubtedly, help to reinforce rapprochement and cooperation among the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union, while creating the conditions for greater stability and security in the vast Sahel region. He urged the international community to put its full weight behind the fresh impetus given by the Security Council and the Secretary-General with a view to definitively settling the dispute.

34. **Ms. Lodhi** (Pakistan) said that the legal framework for achieving the decolonization of the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories already existed in the form of relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions. All that was needed was to summon the political will for their implementation. As colonialism could not be justified under any circumstances, the Special Committee should take stock of current challenges and draw up a practical course of action in order to prevent the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism from turning into a lost decade.

35. The decolonization agenda would remain incomplete without resolution of the long-festering dispute of Jammu and Kashmir, which, along with the dispute over Palestine, was among the oldest items on the United Nations agenda. The right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination had been recognized and promised to them by the Security Council and by both India and Pakistan, but they were still waiting for the Organization to fulfil its promise to hold a United

Nations-supervised plebiscite enabling them to determine their political destiny.

36. For seventy years, through force and fraud, India had prevented the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir from exercising their fundamental and inalienable right to self-determination. Tens of thousands of Indian troops had been deployed to suppress the Kashmiri people's legitimate struggle for freedom. Despite the barbaric violence, extreme cruelty and fraudulent elections used by India to deprive the Kashmiris of their right to self-determination and perpetuate its unlawful occupation, the people of Jammu and Kashmir continued to pursue their struggle for self-determination with courage and conviction. Contrary to Indian claims, Jammu and Kashmir never was and never could be an integral part of India. It was disputed territory, the final status of which had yet to be determined in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

37. In the Middle East, the tragedy of Palestine had intensified. The continued denial of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people was the underlying cause of conflict and a grave impediment to lasting peace in the region. Illegal settlement construction by Israel was progressively eroding the future State of Palestine from within. Pakistan continued to support the just struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom. A strong and viable State of Palestine would be the only guarantor of peace in the region.

38. The Committee must recognize the passionate yearning for freedom in all peoples living under the yoke of colonialism, and help to remove impediments in their path to independence. The United Nations had a legal and moral responsibility in that regard, and the international community must work to eliminate the remaining vestiges of colonialism.

39. **Mr. Tommo Monthe** (Cameroon) said that two important factors would inject a new dynamism into the search for a consensus on the issue of Western Sahara: the increased attention it had received from the Secretary-General since the beginning of his mandate, and the appointment and assumption of office of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara. In his mission, the Personal Envoy should, in considering the recent proposals put forward by the parties, examine all options for consensus or compromise consistent with international law and the principles set forth in the Charter and which would receive the support of the Security Council. Given the regional character of the dispute, a political solution, together with closer cooperation among the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union, would contribute to stability and security in the Sahel region and would foster unity across the African continent, which was plagued by under-development, trafficking of all kinds and terrorism.

40. His delegation hoped that, as in preceding years, the resolution presented would be adopted by consensus, and would give its full support to that decision.

41. **Ms. Badjie** (the Gambia) said that immense progress had been made by some Member States and the United Nations to resolve the issues of decolonization before the Committee through constructive dialogue and concrete action. With respect to Moroccan Sahara, positive steps had been taken by all stakeholders, particularly the Kingdom of Morocco, to ensure that the political process would lead to a lasting solution. As a purely political issue, the problem could be resolved only through political dialogue and by fostering deeper understanding and cooperation among all stakeholders. The recent political impasse in her own country had been brought to an end through successful conflict-prevention diplomacy by its partners, hence her delegation's belief in constructive dialogue, mutual respect and tolerance.

42. The Gambia wished to express its unwavering support for the ongoing political process launched by the Secretary-General in the Sahara and to welcome the efforts of his recently appointed Personal Envoy to achieve a mutually-acceptable political solution to the dispute. She urged the international community to support the recommendations contained in the Security Council resolutions on the Sahara issue, particularly resolution 2351 (2017).

43. The consistent engagement and willingness to compromise demonstrated by the Kingdom of Morocco on the Sahara question was a clear indication of that country's commitment to the ongoing United Nations-led peace process and overall desire to find a lasting solution. The Gambia fully supported the Moroccan autonomy initiative, which was in line with the principle of self-determination and took into consideration the aspirations of the population of the Moroccan Sahara. The initiative was the viable compromise solution for bringing about security and stability in the Maghreb.

44. The substantial progress made by Morocco regarding respect for human rights in the Sahara must also be acknowledged. The Government continued to demonstrate commitment to the National Human Rights

Council and its regional commissions in Laayoune and Dakhla, and cooperated closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. She also congratulated the Government for its efforts to foster participation by the inhabitants of the Sahara in democratic processes at the national, regional and community levels. Its substantial development investments in the southern provinces would also support peacebuilding and create opportunities for employment and economic growth.

45. However, the humanitarian situation of the populations in the Tindouf camps remained a serious concern and served as a reminder of the need for urgent action to uphold international humanitarian law. Her delegation urged all stakeholders to support the Moroccan autonomy initiative for the realization of greater peace and security.

46. **Mr. Nguyen** (Viet Nam) said that his delegation unequivocally supported the efforts of the Organization and its institutions and agencies to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of peoples under colonization and foreign dominance. By the same token, Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the promotion of human rights could not be achieved without decolonization.

47. Having itself undergone prolonged struggles against colonialism in its quest for national self-determination and independence, Viet Nam strongly advocated the complete eradication of colonialism as promoted by United Nations institutions and agencies in the spirit of the Declaration and the resolution on the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Further effective measures and actions were necessary to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the right of colonial peoples to self-determination.

48. Notwithstanding the progress in decolonization since the establishment of the Special Committee and the dialogues between the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the administering Powers, Viet Nam was of the view that the latter should cooperate fully with the Special Committee to ensure that their activities did not negatively affect the legitimate interests of the peoples in those Territories, but rather would promote their socioeconomic development, protecting their environment and assisting them in exercising their rights to self-determination towards eventual independence, in line with the Charter and the relevant resolutions.

49. His delegation reaffirmed its commitment to work with the other Member States towards the successful outcomes of the Committee, and to advance their shared goal of decolonization and self-determination.

50. **Mr. Alswar** (Bahrain), recalling that more than 80 Non-Self-Governing Territories had attained their independence since the inception of the United Nations in 1945 and the issuance of the Declaration, reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, with the 1967 borders, in accordance with international legitimacy, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of a two-State solution.

51. His delegation also supported all political efforts to reach a settlement of the problem in the Moroccan Sahara, within the parameters of the national sovereignty of the Kingdom of Morocco and based on Security Council resolutions and the Western Sahara autonomy proposal, as well as for all efforts to implement the Declaration and all related United Nations resolutions, so as to enable colonial peoples to live in peace and security and attain development, growth and the full enjoyment of their rights.

52. **Ms. Nikodijevic** (Serbia) said that, in application of Chapter 11 of the Charter, Gibraltar had been registered as a Non-Self-Governing Territory and included on the list of Territories subject to decolonization. Of particular importance was General Assembly resolution 2070 (XX), which invited the two States concerned to negotiate the question of Gibraltar bilaterally. Only the United Nations could decide when the decolonization process relating to Gibraltar had been concluded.

53. Serbia firmly believed that the process could be concluded only through bilateral negotiations between Spain and the United Kingdom, and called on the two sides to resume negotiations to reach a sustainable agreement in fulfilment of the relevant United Nations resolutions. Such an approach excluded unilateral acts, but should include mutual understanding, respect for international law, the Charter and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, and a firm commitment to the principles of sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States.

54. Her delegation welcomed all constructive proposals that would lead to a solution acceptable to all the parties involved. Serbia supported the proposal presented by Spain in 2016, which provided for

co-sovereignty over Gibraltar, as a sound and viable solution to the question, and believed that it would bring about a solution that would benefit all parties concerned.

55. **Mr. Oussein** (Comoros) said that the principle of decolonization was intrinsically linked to that of territorial integrity. Several island States in the Indian Ocean were unable to exercise their right to sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability, because certain permanent Members of the Security Council refused to countenance total independence for them and blocked the implementation of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Half a century of conflicts over territorial and sovereignty issues must inevitably undermine the credibility of the Organization.

56. His delegation wished to encourage the ongoing process for a negotiated political solution to the situation in Western Sahara under the auspices of the Secretary-General and through the action of his Personal Envoy, and, in particular, to express its support for Security Council resolution 2351 (2017) in favour of a political solution aimed at sustaining peace and security in a volatile region, subject to terrorist threats and risky migrant flows.

57. Stability and development in the Sahara must be accompanied by a scrupulous respect for human rights and the effective control of the number and situation of the refugees. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees would thus be able to act freely and effectively for the benefit of the Saharan populations, especially those in the camps, who had not been consistently assessed or adequately provided for. His delegation reaffirmed its unqualified support for the Moroccan autonomy initiative, the organization of successful, democratic local elections, and economic and social development for improving the well-being of the populations of the Sahara.

58. **Mr. Ten-Pow** (Guyana) said that, as a former colony itself, Guyana understood well the passionate yearning for freedom experienced by dependent people, which was rooted in an innate desire to fashion their own destiny. The right to self-determination was a core principle of the United Nations, and the onus was on its Members to act collectively to ensure that the people of Non-Self-Governing Territories were able to exercise that right freely.

59. To deny fundamental human rights and freedoms to some peoples of the world was incompatible with the vision set forth in the Charter and with the obligations of the international community under the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Colonialism had no place in a world governed by international law.

60. With the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in its latter years, his delegation urged the administering Powers of Non-Self-Governing Territories to cooperate fully with the United Nations in finalizing a constructive programme of work for the implementation of the relevant resolutions on decolonization, including those relating to specific Non-Self-Governing Territories. In the hope of seeing measurable progress in that regard by the end of the Third Decade, his delegation underscored the importance of continued dialogue among the administering Powers, responsible for promoting the well-being of the inhabitants of the Territories under their administration; the Special Committee, the primary vehicle for fostering the decolonization process; and the colonized peoples of the Territories themselves.

61. His delegation welcomed the recent appointment of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and encouraged all parties to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General and the Personal Envoy to facilitate the achievement of a just, lasting and mutually-acceptable political settlement that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. The well-being of the Sahrawi people should be foremost in the minds of all stakeholders and the parties should demonstrate the political will necessary for achieving a just and durable solution to the issue.

62. **Mr. Gata Mavita** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that that peace in Western Sahara had remained elusive despite repeated efforts by the international community. Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda seemed unattainable for the populations of Western Sahara, who had known no peace for several years. His country appealed to the international community to respect the desire of the Saharan people for autonomy within the State of Morocco, a desire further confirmed in national legislative elections in Moroccan Sahara in October 2016. The autonomy initiative would not only allow the reunification of families separated for over 40 years as a result of the conflict, but also end the

recruitment of large numbers of desperate young Saharans by armed extremist groups.

63. The international community should rally behind the Secretary-General, his Personal Envoy, and the ongoing political process with a view to reaching a negotiated, mutually-acceptable political solution as recommended in numerous Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2351 (2017), the most recent. With his skill and political experience, the new Personal Envoy would infuse a new spirit into the peace process, thereby enabling a lasting solution to the dispute and restoring stability and security to the Sahel region.

64. He welcomed the parties' commitment to enter into a fifth series of negotiations. The autonomy initiative put forward by the Kingdom of Morocco, deemed serious and credible by the Security Council in its resolution 2044 (2012), was the basis for the current political process and the only framework for a compromise that would lead to a just, lasting and mutually-acceptable political solution. The parties should pursue those negotiations in a spirit of compromise and realism, and the countries of the region, along with the international community as a whole, should support the process and cooperate fully with the United Nations to resolve the current impasse and the worrying humanitarian situation of the Saharan populations, particularly those living in the Tindouf camps.

65. **Mr. Delfim Da Silva** (Guinea Bissau) said that his country gave its wholehearted support to the Kingdom of Morocco on the issue of Western Sahara. His delegation welcomed the efforts of the Moroccan Government, in particular its autonomy initiative and development model for the southern provinces, and expressed the hope that they would be successful.

66. **Mr. Prasad** (India) said that, as a co-sponsor of the Declaration in 1960 and the first elected Chair of the Committee in 1962, his country derived great satisfaction from the fact that the world had moved forward from a largely colonial organization of Territories to a vibrant community of independent nation States. The Committee's special responsibility against the background of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism was to guide the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories towards their desired objectives.

67. In a globally inter-connected world, the decolonization process should be based on pragmatism and the current wishes of the people of the Territories rather than adhering rigidly to ideological principles of the past. Global climate change, a phenomenon with unforeseen consequences for the Non-Self-Governing Territories, was one example of shifting priorities and needs. The priority of the Special Committee should be greater cooperation with international agencies and actors and harnessing all available channels of assistance for the Non-Self-Governing Territories, thus enabling the Territories to make progress towards their desired economic, social and political objectives.

68. Even as all the other speakers had focused on issues relating to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, however, the Indian delegation rejected as a diversion from the agenda and a distraction not worthy of a response the efforts of the delegation of Pakistan to bring issues that had never, in all its history, been on the agenda of the Committee.

69. **Mr. Martins** (Angola) said that, having lived through decades of colonial rule and achieved independence through the joint efforts of the international community, Angola stood by all Territories and peoples seeking to achieve their inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with the principles established in the Charter and in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

70. The General Assembly had full responsibility for completing the decolonization of Western Sahara through the free expression of the sovereign will of the Sahrawi people. His delegation reiterated its call for the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Polisario to find an acceptable political solution, under the auspices of the United Nations, by holding a free and fair referendum allowing the Sahrawi people to choose their own destiny and avoiding the risk of destabilizing an already-volatile region.

71. Angola welcomed the reintegration of the Kingdom of Morocco into the African Union and hoped that it would result in efforts by the parties to continue negotiations and find a mutually-acceptable solution consistent with the principles of the African Union and the relevant Security Council resolutions. His delegation urged the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to fulfil its mandated obligations.

72. Angola recognized the efforts of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General in his mission to seek a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict, and also supported the efforts and initiatives of the African Union

in that regard. His delegation reiterated its commitment to finding a just solution to the dispute, and encouraged the Committee to visit the Non-Self-Governing Territories within the framework of its mandate.

73. **Mr. Al-Hamadi** (Qatar) said that his delegation was in favour of all efforts aimed at constructive, pragmatic solutions between parties for the achievement of peace, stability and welfare in all situations. The questions before the Committee should be addressed with due regard for the particularities of each case.

74. The Palestinian people had the right to self-determination. They should be allowed to enjoy all of their inalienable rights and live in peace in an independent State within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

75. The State of Qatar had always advocated dialogue and constructive cooperation as the best method for arriving at a consensual, final political solution to the question of Western Sahara. He welcomed the political process launched under the auspices of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy. The recent Gulf Cooperation Council Summit had recognized the Moroccan autonomy initiative as a constructive proposal and a basis for resolving the territorial dispute. A political solution to that dispute would enhance cooperation among neighbouring States and contribute to stability and security throughout the region. The General Assembly should be supported in its efforts to lead the political process to a successful conclusion and to preserve the consensual nature of the resolution before the Committee.

76. **Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) said that his Government strongly advocated dialogue and peaceful, political means for preventing conflicts and reaching mutually-satisfactory settlements because, just as dialogue and consensus were essential for peace and security, so peace and security were essential for ensuring sustainable development and the well-being of populations.

77. The long-standing dispute in Western Sahara, which had given rise to serious tensions in preceding years, had recently taken a positive turn towards dialogue. His delegation encouraged the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to reach a viable, realistic and mutually-acceptable solution, negotiated in an appropriate and stable environment, and highly commended the efforts of the Kingdom of Morocco in that regard. The parties to the conflict must resolutely support the facilitation mission of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General and continue to improve the human-rights situation and economic and social development in Western Sahara. The other countries of the region and the international community as a whole must contribute positively to those efforts, so that Western Sahara would be able to embark on the process envisaged in the 2030 Agenda once an appropriate outcome had been attained.

78. **Ms. Radwan** (Saudi Arabia) said that failure to eliminate colonial rule permanently was unacceptable. Her delegation renewed its call on all administering Powers of Non-Self-Governing Territories to honour their commitments and to work seriously, through dialogue, with all stakeholders to arrive at constructive and practical solutions in order to maintain peace and security and lay the groundwork for prosperity.

79. Citing yet again the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, including that of self-determination, she called for serious commitment to implementing the relevant United Nations resolutions. All stakeholders should respond positively to the Arab Peace Initiative, launched more than 15 years earlier by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with a view to establishing the independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, and withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories including the Syrian Arab Golan and the Lebanese occupied territories.

80. Saudi Arabia welcomed all efforts aimed at arriving at a political, consensual resolution of the question of Western Sahara under the auspices of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy in keeping with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the most recent being resolution 2351 (2017). The Gulf Cooperation Council had reaffirmed its principled position supporting the Moroccan autonomy initiative envisaging full autonomy for the Sahara, a positive and constructive suggestion that would lead to consensual solutions. Not only was the initiative consistent with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, but it also accorded with the principle of the right to self-determination.

81. Saudi Arabia valued the efforts by the Kingdom of Morocco to boost economic and social development in the Sahara region, and rejected any attempt to undermine the supreme national interests of Morocco or compromise its sovereignty. The final settlement of the dispute was essential for the achievement of stability and security in the Sahel region, which was exposed to security threats from all sides.

82. **Mr. Hickey** (United Kingdom) said that the relationship between the Government of the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories was a modern one, based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British. The relationship brought mutual benefits and responsibilities. The Territories were an integral part of Global Britain and the United Kingdom maintained a strong commitment to their security and prosperity, as demonstrated by the swift and comprehensive response to the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Irma and ongoing recovery efforts.

83. The United Kingdom-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council was the primary forum for high-level political dialogue between the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories and would hold its sixth session in November 2017. As the United Kingdom negotiated to leave the European Union, it was fully committed to taking into account the priorities of the Overseas Territories, including Gibraltar. The United Kingdom-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council on European Union Negotiations had been created to discuss Territory priorities and agree further areas for collective engagement. A separate Council on Gibraltar-European Union Negotiations, for discussing Gibraltar priorities and agreeing shared and substantive programmes of work, had already held four meetings.

84. In its 2016 communiqué, the Joint Ministerial Council stated its commitment to explore ways in which the Overseas Territories could maintain international support against hostile sovereignty claims, and that the United Kingdom would continue to support requests for the removal of Territories with permanent populations who wished it from the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

85. The fundamental responsibility of the United Kingdom Government, under international law and the Charter of the United Nations, was to ensure the security and good governance of the Territories and their peoples. However, governments of the Overseas Territories of the United Kingdom were expected to meet the same high standards as that of the United Kingdom in maintaining the rule of law, respect for human rights and integrity in public life. Democratic development of the Overseas Territories continued, with elections held recently in the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Cayman Islands and Bermuda. Elections would be held in the Falkland Islands in November 2017.

86. The United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and surrounding maritime areas, nor about the principle and the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter and in the two International Covenants on human rights, by virtue of which they freely determined their political status and freely pursued their economic, social and cultural development. No dialogue on sovereignty could take place unless the Falkland Islanders so wished. In the 2013 referendum, 99.8% of voters had voted against such a dialogue.

87. Lastly, the longstanding commitment of the United Kingdom to the people of Gibraltar was unchanged. The United Kingdom would not enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another State against their freely and democratically expressed wishes; nor would it enter into a process of sovereignty negotiations with which Gibraltar was not content.

88. **Mr. Mantilo** (Timor-Leste) said that his country, once a Non-Self-Governing Territory within the purview of the Committee, had achieved decolonization in August 1999 through a popular consultation under United Nations supervision, and its independence had been restored in 2002. The Committee had played an important role in the realization of his country's right to self-determination. Although resolutions concerning the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories were issued every year, however, no notable changes had occurred for nearly two decades, and in some Territories, gross human rights violations continued to be committed.

89. Timor-Leste and Western Sahara shared similarities in multiple aspects of their history. They had both been the subject of various United Nations resolutions reaffirming their rights and setting out the steps needed for realizing self-determination. Timor-Leste had benefited from those resolutions and was currently a full Member of the Organization. However, such was not the case to date for Western Sahara, for which the issue was one of decolonization. Timor-Leste therefore reaffirmed its enduring solidarity with the people of Western Sahara and strong support for their legitimate right to self-determination. Diplomatic relations between Timor-Leste and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic would be further enhanced through the embassy of the latter in his country's capital, Dili.

90. The illegal exploitation of the natural resources of Western Sahara by the Kingdom of Morocco was cause

for concern and had been the subject of recent rulings by the Court of Justice of the European Union and by a court in South Africa. Timor-Leste called for the resumption of talks without precondition between the Kingdom of Morocco and the legitimate representatives of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

91. His delegation fully supported efforts by the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, as well as those undertaken by the African Union Special Envoy for Western Sahara, to reach a political solution regarding the Territory. Recalling the various resolutions adopted by the United Nations on the issue, he reasserted his country's commitment to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), which asserted the fundamental right of all peoples to self-determination.

92. **Mr. Al-Shanfari** (Oman) called for the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in a way that would enhance confidence based on mutual respect and good neighbourliness. He stressed his country's full support for the Palestinian people's inalienable right to establish a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. He called on all parties, particularly the Government of Israel, to respond to the peace initiative and to move from managing disputes to resolving disputes in a manner that would achieve stability for all the peoples and countries of the region.

93. Oman fully supported all efforts by the United Nations, represented by the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, to achieve an internationally-legitimate political solution to the question, in order to guarantee the rights of the Saharan people while preserving the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Morocco over the Saharan region.

94. **Mr. Aisabah** (Kuwait) said that his country firmly supported the right of peoples to self-determination, in accordance with Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Charter and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). Expressing deep concern at the failure of the Organization and the countries in question to meet their responsibilities under that resolution to end to all forms of colonialism, he repeated his call for the Special Committee to deal with Non-Self-Governing Territories on a case-by-case basis, in order to enable the peoples of those Territories to participate fully in deciding their future. The administering Powers should cooperate fully with the Committee and provide sound and accurate information on the political, social, economic and educational situation in those Territories, in accordance with article 73 *e* of the Charter.

95. His delegation supported the resumption of negotiations, under United Nations auspices, on a solution acceptable to all parties to the dispute in Western Sahara, and wished the Secretary-General and his newly-appointed Personal Envoy success in their efforts to bring about a political settlement. Kuwait supported the Moroccan autonomy initiative as a viable option, and commended Morocco on the steps taken to ensure respect for human rights in Western Sahara and for its full cooperation with the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. His delegation reiterated the need to respect the unity and territorial integrity of Morocco, recalling that the Security Council had recognized that a political solution to the conflict would promote cooperation between members of the Arab Maghreb Union and contribute to peace and security in the Sahel region.

96. Although Palestine was not a Non-Self-Governing Territory, the occupation of the Palestinian territories must be ended and full rights granted to the Palestinian people, enabling them to enjoy their right to self-determination under the relevant resolutions and, within a framework of international legitimacy, to establish their own independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Israel, the occupying Power, must withdraw fully from the Arab territories it had occupied since 1967, so as to establish peace and security in the region in accordance with Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

97. **Ms. Bannis-Roberts** (Dominica) said that Dominica continued to lend its full support to the ongoing political process in Western Sahara, being monitored by the United Nations Secretary-General and facilitated by his Personal Envoy, aimed at achieving a mutually-acceptable and negotiated political solution. The resolution of the dispute would undoubtedly help to reinforce stability and security in the Sahel region, which faced growing threats linked to terrorism, transnational organized crime and trafficking of all kinds. Her delegation welcomed the efforts by Morocco to enhance regional and subregional cooperation in order to tackle those challenges. The return of Morocco to the African Union, moreover, would have a positive impact on the socioeconomic development of Africa and would further enhance peace and stability on the continent.

98. **Ms. Flores Herrera** (Panama) said that the Secretary-General's commitment to complete the decolonization agenda was encouraging.

99. Almost six decades after the adoption of the Declaration, the organization was more diverse, heterogeneous and robust, having welcomed as Member States more than 80 former Non-Self-Governing Territories. Nevertheless, the United Nations and its Member States must continue to work constructively to eliminate colonialism by the end of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

100. In adopting the 2030 Agenda, the international community pledged to transform the world and to leave no one behind. The populations of the Non-Self-Governing Territories must not be overlooked in the fulfilment of that pledge.

101. Her delegation reiterated its full support for the legitimate sovereignty claims of Argentina over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, and appealed to Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume discussions as a step towards the negotiation, in good faith and without preconditions, of a peaceful solution in favour of respect for the territorial integrity of those territories.

102. The threats to the security of Western Sahara, and the human suffering endured there, must be confronted in a coordinated manner and in a spirit of cooperation. Convinced of the need for the resumption of the negotiation process, her delegation trusted in the good will of both parties and in the renewed efforts of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General to infuse a new spirit of dynamism in the light of Security Council resolution 2351 (2017), leading to a just, lasting, mutually-acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of the Western Sahara in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter.

103. **Mr. Tito** (Kiribati) said that Kiribati had enjoyed self-determination and political independence since 1979, when his people, by mutual agreement with the United Kingdom, had obtained their independence. His Government was very supportive of its Pacific brothers and cousins who wished to take the same path, but also respected the great historical links that existed, and the good relations and connections that they enjoyed, with friends in Europe and elsewhere. Thus, his country's approach had always been to advocate friendly dialogue between his indigenous brothers, who aspired to independence, and their partners. Kiribati continued to adopt that attitude whenever approached by people from elsewhere in the world who sought its support in their bids for political independence. Pacific peoples had always been welcome to join the Pacific Islands Forum and other forums, regardless of their political status.

104. Greatly respecting the wish of the Saharan people for self-determination, but also respectfully noting the wish of the Kingdom of Morocco to work out an arrangement on friendly terms with the Saharan people, his delegation supported the plan in that direction. It also fully supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to facilitate the political process of dialogue and friendly discussions.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

105. **Ms. Hourmouzios** (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and surrounding maritime areas, nor about the principle and the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the two International Covenants on human rights, by virtue of which they freely determined their political status and freely pursued their economic, social and cultural development. Thus, there could be no dialogue on sovereignty unless the Falkland Islanders so wished. The 2013 referendum had sent a clear message that the Falkland Islanders did not want dialogue on sovereignty; Argentina should respect those wishes. The relationship of the United Kingdom with the Falkland Islands and with all of its Overseas Territories was a modern one, based on partnership, shared values and the rights of the people of each Territory to determine their own future. Argentina continued to deny that such fundamental human rights applied to the people of the Falkland Islands, and continued to act in ways that were contrary to the principles established in the Charter.

106. None of the regional statements of diplomatic support for sovereignty negotiations invoked by Argentina modified or diluted the obligation of nations to respect the legally-binding principle of self-determination. The United Kingdom was also clear about both the historical and the legal position regarding sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, as set out in its 2 October 2017 statement, and wished to stress that no civilian population had been expelled from the Falkland Islands on 3 January 1833. The claim to the Islands by the Republic of Argentina, based on the principle of

disruption of its territorial integrity, was without foundation, as the Islands had never legitimately been administered by, or formed part of, the sovereign territory of Argentina.

107. Regarding Gibraltar, she reiterated the points made in the 6 October 2017 statement, recalling the sovereignty of United Kingdom over Gibraltar and the territorial waters surrounding it and reaffirming that, as a separate Territory recognized by the United Nations and included since 1946 on its list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, it enjoyed the rights accorded to it under the Charter, including the right to self-determination. The 2006 Gibraltar Constitution, which had been endorsed in referendum by the people of Gibraltar, provided for a modern and mature relationship between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom.

108. The Government of the United Kingdom restated its longstanding commitment to the people of Gibraltar that it would not enter into arrangements under which they would pass under the sovereignty of another State against their freely and democratically expressed wishes. The United Kingdom also confirmed that it would not enter into a process of sovereignty negotiations with which Gibraltar was not content. The United Kingdom reaffirmed its commitment to safeguard Gibraltar, its people and its economy.

109. **Ms. Pedros Carretero** (Spain) reaffirmed that the Treaty of Utrecht, which had ended the war between Spain and the United Kingdom, had been very clear regarding the extent of the territory ceded to the latter. Under the Treaty, Spain had ceded, without any form of jurisdiction, only the town and the castle of Gibraltar, together with the port, defences and fortresses belonging to them. The surrounding waters had never been, and never would be, ceded.

110. She further reaffirmed the resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly and the Committee and by all relevant forums as well as the Brussels Declaration of 1984, in which the Kingdom of Spain and the United Kingdom had resolved to negotiate and address issues of sovereignty.

111. Regarding the future exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union, which saddened her country, the proposal made by her delegation before the Committee on 4 October 2017 remained valid, its purpose being to ensure the socioeconomic well-being of Gibraltar and the Campo de Gibraltar. She stressed that Spain was trying to reach an agreement with the United Kingdom for the implementation of a new cooperation arrangement for the benefit of the inhabitants of both sides of the fence.

112. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) said that he wished to reiterate in full the statements made by the Vice-President of Argentina at the current session of the General Assembly and by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship before the Special Committee in June 2017. The Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were an integral part of the national territory of Argentina. The Islands had been illegally occupied by the United Kingdom and were therefore the subject of a sovereignty dispute that was recognized by a number of international organizations and by successive General Assembly resolutions calling on the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations in order to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute as soon as possible. That position had also been endorsed by the Special Committee and the Organization of American States.

113. Argentina regretted the attempts of Great Britain to conceal the act of usurpation it had committed in 1833, which had been repeatedly protested by Argentina. Those attempts to distort history revealed the lack of certainty of the United Kingdom about the lawfulness of its position with respect to the status of the archipelagos concerned. Instead of trying to refute historical facts whose occurrence it had already acknowledged, the United Kingdom should honour the commitment it had made to seek a just and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute through bilateral negotiations with Argentina, in compliance with General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX).

114. The Argentine Government rejected all the false allegations and distortions of history contained in the so-called white paper relating to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands, as well as any British attempt to introduce unilateral modifications in the situation in those archipelagos and the surrounding maritime areas while the sovereignty dispute was unresolved.

115. The principle of self-determination, which was the only basis invoked by the United Kingdom in support of its position, was manifestly inapplicable to the dispute in question. The illegal vote in the Malvinas Islands was a unilateral action undertaken by the United Kingdom that did not resolve the dispute or affect the inalienable rights of Argentina or the work of the Special Committee. The so-called referendum had been a tautological exercise in which British subjects had been

asked whether they wished to remain British, and could not resolve the sovereignty dispute. Allowing the British inhabitants of the Islands to arbitrate in a sovereignty dispute to which their own country was a party distorted the right to self-determination of peoples, given that the people of the Islands were not subjected to subjugation, domination or exploitation by a colonial Power. The interests of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands were adequately addressed by resolutions of the General Assembly and by the Constitution of Argentina. Argentina reaffirmed its legitimate sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

116. **Ms. Lodhi** (Pakistan) recalled that the decolonization agenda was not limited to the issue of Non-Self-Governing Territories, but also encompassed other peoples still living under alien occupation and foreign domination. The Committee's aim, therefore, should be to ensure that all peoples under colonial administration or foreign occupation were allowed to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. The decolonization agenda of the United Nations would remain incomplete without the resolution of the long-festering issue of Jammu and Kashmir. The question of Kashmir, by any definition, was an international dispute. If the parties failed to resolve a dispute, the United Nations and the international community had not only the right but the obligation to intervene to help resolve the dispute. That obligation was explicit in the case of Jammu and Kashmir, since the Security Council had been involved with the dispute since its very inception and because the Council had prescribed specifically and precisely how it should be resolved.

117. The struggle of the Kashmiri people for self-determination was a legitimate one, and they had the right to receive the moral and political support of the international community.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee
Fourth Committee

Summary record of the 9th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 10 October 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

Contents

Agenda item 58: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*)

Agenda item 59: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)

Agenda item 60: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (*continued*)

Agenda item 61: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)

Agenda item 62: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 58: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. V and XIII) and A/72/62)

Agenda item 59: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. VI and XIII))

Agenda item 60: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. VII and XIII) and A/72/69)

Agenda item 61: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/72/66 and A/72/66/Add.1)

Agenda item 62: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. VIII, IX, X, XI and XIII) and A/72/74)

1. **Mr. Tevi** (Vanuatu) said that his country attached particular importance to safeguarding the human rights of the indigenous people in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, as decolonization and human rights were pillars of its foreign policy. He hoped that the Territories' aspirations for self-determination would be addressed in the foreseeable future. 2018 would be a milestone year for New Caledonia as its people would choose its political future in the referendum proposed under the Nouméa Accord. However, the electoral process remained unresolved, with some 20,000 New Caledonians excluded from the electoral roll. Vanuatu called on the administering Power to cooperate amicably with the people of New Caledonia to address the issue in order to facilitate a free, fair and transparent referendum.

2. Despite the call from some to remove French Polynesia from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, his delegation would like to see the Territory remain listed in order to ensure that its concerns would continue to be heard by the United Nations. The administering Power should pursue its dialogue on self-determination with the people of French Polynesia, with a view to enabling them to choose their political status.

3. Vanuatu fully supported the political process aimed at achieving a lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the regional dispute over Western Sahara, under the oversight of the Secretary-General, whose efforts should be commended. His delegation also welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General earlier that year and called on all parties to demonstrate the political will necessary to resume the stalled negotiations process. The parties should recall their endorsement of the recommendation in the report of 14 April 2008 that realism and a spirit of compromise were essential to achieving progress in negotiations. Neighbouring countries should also make meaningful and cooperative contributions to the process. His country would continue to support the work of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and would endorse an extension of its mandate beyond April 2018 if necessary.

4. **Mr. Sisa** (Botswana) said that his country, a long-standing supporter of the Palestinian struggle for sovereignty and independent statehood, had established diplomatic relations with the State of Palestine in 2017. The minimal progress achieved towards a viable solution of the question of Palestine in the half-century since the Israeli occupation was regrettable. He also expressed concern that despite the Secretary-General's efforts, the Sahrawi people continued to be denied their right to self-determination and independence. The negotiation process must therefore be revived and the living conditions of the Sahrawi people improved. Continued colonial domination precluded peace, development and universal respect for human rights; the eradication of colonialism must therefore remain the Organization's responsibility. His delegation encouraged the parties to the dispute over Western Sahara to approach negotiations in a spirit of tolerance and compromise in order to reach an agreement.

5. The will of the people, as expressed in a democratic and open referendum, would have to be respected by all. The international community must support efforts to establish a ceasefire and create an environment conducive to a referendum, culminating in self-determination for the Sahrawi people. The Secretary-General's new and coordinated approach to the negotiations was particularly heartening. His delegation welcomed the recent appointment of a new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara and noted the extension of the mandate of MINURSO for another year, with a view to stabilizing the situation. In closing, he reiterated his country's support for the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in their quest to exercise self-determination.

6. **Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) said that his delegation reiterated its call for the General Assembly to discontinue consideration of the Saharan question, in

accordance with to Article 12, paragraph 1 of the Charter, in order to allow the Security Council to conduct without interference the process that would lead to a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution. That Article clearly stipulated that the General Assembly must not make any recommendation on an issue of which the Security Council was seized. The question of Moroccan Sahara was the only such matter on the agenda of the Security Council and the Special Committee on decolonization, and it was the only dispute being dealt with through a political process under the auspices of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy under Chapter VI.

7. The Saharan question of Moroccan Sahara was not a decolonization issue but rather a matter of restoring the territorial integrity of Morocco. Contrary to the views of those still pining for the Cold War era and of proponents of the selective application of the principle of self-determination, Moroccan Sahara had re-joined its motherland in 1975, in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations. In order to make sense of the equation of Moroccan Sahara and the territorial integrity of Morocco, it was necessary to understand the history of the country, whose different regions had been occupied in stages by various colonial Powers, starting in the 19th century and later restored in a similarly gradual manner. The final two occupied southern Moroccan territories, namely, Sidi Ifni and the Sahara, had been recovered from Spain in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2072 (XX) of 16 December 1965, which requested the Government of Spain, as the administering Power, to take immediately all necessary measures for the liberation of the Territories of Ifni and Spanish Sahara from colonial domination. As there had been no Frente Polisario in 1965, that entity had no legitimate claim to the Sahara. The decolonization of the Sahara had been recognized by the United Nations, which had taken note of the Madrid Accord signed between Morocco and Spain in General Assembly resolution 3458B (XXX) of 10 December 1975.

8. Algeria had deployed the principle of self-determination in respect of the Sahara and no other region of Morocco, creating a separatist movement in order to wage a proxy war against his country. In so doing, Algeria had selectively interpreted General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), which had clearly established the primacy of territorial integrity and its precedence over the self-determination of peoples. The resolution defined the latter as a simple right, while the former was an obligation that all States, including Algeria, must abide by, and one that, unlike the principle of self-determination, had been linked to compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The safeguards included in General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV), which stipulated that self-determination did not apply to a part or region of a sovereign State Member of the United Nations, had been intended to prevent the implementation of self-determination from degenerating into balkanization. The principle of self-determination applied only to peoples that had no ties with a Member State and that were geographically, ethnically, culturally or linguistically distinct from the country administering them. Given that the Moroccan Sahara was geographically contiguous with Morocco; that its people shared a common language, religion, demographic makeup and culture with those of Morocco; and that its tribes, like the remainder of the Moroccan people, pledged allegiance to the King of Morocco, it was abundantly clear that the principle of self-determination, as defined in General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV), did not apply to the Moroccan Sahara.

9. Determined to establish regional hegemony and dismember Morocco, Algeria continued to distort the principle of self-determination by insisting on the exercise of Saharan self-determination by a referendum. However, none of the General Assembly resolutions on self-determination required its exercise to take place via a referendum. Those resolutions left the choice of mechanism up to the parties and merely proposed four distinct, equally valid potential outcomes to a process culminating in self-determination, namely, independence, association, integration or any other freely chosen political status. Of the 64 decolonization situations resolved by the United Nations since 1945, only four had been settled through a referendum, and of those four, two had degenerated into fratricidal civil wars, attesting to the inherent dangers of that particular mechanism.

10. The option of a referendum had been definitively ruled out for the Sahara. The report of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the Security Council (S/2000/131) had concluded that the 1991 Settlement Plan, and thus the referendum, would not constitute a viable solution, a conclusion affirmed by the Council, which had abandoned the option of a referendum in favour of a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution.

11. Morocco remained committed to resolving the regional dispute in spite of its conviction that the Sahara's reintegration into Morocco had resolved the colonial situation and that the principle of self-determination in no way applied to it. The Security Council had defined the parameters of that process in the 12 resolutions it had adopted since 2007, calling for a mutually acceptable and negotiated political solution;

welcoming the Moroccan autonomy initiative as serious and credible; and urging neighbouring countries, chiefly Algeria, to make significant contributions to the political process. It was deeply regrettable that Algeria had met his country's good-faith initiatives with intransigence, using a separatist movement as a weapon, sabotaging the political process and thwarting every effort to achieve peace. Its treasonous support of a non-State entity's bid for admission into the Organization of African Unity, its insistence on including Algerian and sub-Saharan citizens in the census carried out by the United Nations ahead of the referendum, effectively rendering the Settlement Plan unworkable; its ferocious but ultimately futile campaign to prevent Morocco from re-joining the African Union; and its open opposition to the Framework Agreement proposed by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General in 2002 were but a few instances of its obstructionist stance. He reminded Algeria that the Saharan question could only be resolved successfully with its cooperation and that it must assume responsibility for its role in the dispute and come to the negotiation table. The solution ultimately lay with Algerian political leadership, not with the so-called Frente Polisario in Tindouf.

12. Morocco remained determined to implement its advanced regionalization initiative in the Sahara as a precursor to autonomy. Its new development model would enable the Saharan population to take the reins of regional economic development, which must not be held hostage to the political process or the distortions of other parties. Regional and legislative elections held in 2015 and 2016 had been described by United Nations observers as transparent and proceeded without incident; the Saharan population's participation in the democratic process had strengthened the rule of law and respect for human rights. The prosperity, liberty and hope of life in the southern provinces of Morocco stood in stark contrast to the misery and despair of the camps in Tindouf, Algeria, where the captive populations, in addition to suffering human rights violations, had for several decades been deprived of humanitarian aid sent to them by international donors. Reports by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) had confirmed the large-scale diversion of humanitarian aid for the benefit of Frente Polisario and Algerian officials. Worse still, Algeria had neglected its duties as host country by allowing a militarized and armed separatist group to rule over and terrorize allegedly civilian camps. That refugee population was the only one in the world whose exact numbers remained a mystery to the international community and a secret carefully guarded by Algeria, in violation of international law, international humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions.

13. The global rise of separatist movements confirmed that the rampant exploitation of self-determination for political ends, fuelled by a blind obsession with referendums, endangered the stability, unity and development of many countries. In closing, Morocco reaffirmed its unwavering attachment to the sacrosanct principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States and stood with all Governments determined to champion those principles in their own countries.

14. **Mr. Boukadoum** (Algeria) said that 72 years earlier, in preparation for the establishment of what would become the United Nations, the authors of its future Charter had deemed it indispensable to articulate the principle of the self-determination of peoples. The Organization's founders clearly had in mind the goal of ending colonial domination. Following the horrors of the Second World War, two more decades would pass before many peoples, including his own, gained acceptance as nations. Against that backdrop, he expressed frustration at the fact that the merits of the domination of man by man were still being debated in 2017. Member States must put aside their differences and align their deeds with what he hoped was an increasing awareness of those fundamental truths. The Committee's debate should focus on how to put an end to colonial domination swiftly and peacefully.

15. Two years shy of the end of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories that remained were 17 too many. He wondered whether a fourth or fifth decade would be bequeathed to future generations. With a multitude of pressing global challenges to tackle, Member States could not afford to be sidetracked by a question that was a straightforward matter of freedom and justice. The Committee and the Special Committee on decolonization must take a stand against colonialism, a man-made system to which only man could put a definitive end.

16. Turning to Western Sahara, he stressed that the conflict, the last unresolved colonial situation in Africa, pitted the Frente Polisario against Morocco. The issue had been on the United Nations decolonization agenda for over 54 years. There had been no ambiguity concerning the legal status of Western Sahara when it had been listed as a Non-Self-Governing Territory. The landmark 1975 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice had concluded that there were no legal ties of any nature between Western Sahara and the two concerned neighbouring countries that might affect the

implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and confirmed unequivocally the inalienable rights of the Territory's people to the free and genuine exercise of self-determination. Subsequent United Nations resolutions had repeatedly and unequivocally reaffirmed the legal nature of the conflict and the principle of self-determination that must be implemented.

17. In 1988 the Organization of African Unity had brokered a settlement plan to put an end to 16 years of open conflict. The Security Council-endorsed plan remained the only valid agreement accepted by both parties. Furthermore, the Security Council had unanimously adopted resolution 690 (1991), which provided for the United Nations Mission on the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), mandated, as its name indicated, to organize and monitor a referendum on self-determination. The MINURSO mandate had been retained in recent Security Council resolutions, indicating that the Council continued to insist, as it had since 1975, on the right of the people of Western Sahara to exercise self-determination. The Council had recently extended the mission's mandate until April 2018 and called on both parties to resume negotiations without preconditions and in good faith, under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

18. His delegation welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General and reaffirmed its support for efforts to relaunch the negotiation process without delay. In accordance with its Constitutive Act, the African Union had continued to seek actively a peaceful resolution of the conflict, which opposed two of its member States. The Heads of State of the African Union had adopted a resolution the previous year calling on the General Assembly to set a date for the referendum. The African Union had also stressed the urgent need to address the issue of illegal exploration and exploitation of the Territory's natural resources, bearing in mind the Secretary-General's call for all relevant actors to recognize that the interests of the inhabitants of the Territories were paramount, in accordance with Chapter 11 of the Charter and with legal opinions issued by various international organizations.

19. To conclude, he reiterated that resolving the conflict in Western Sahara was crucial for his country and for regional stability and integration. There was no alternative to respect for the well-established United Nations doctrine on decolonization.

20. **The Chair** said that, in the light of the devastation wrought by the recent natural disasters in the Caribbean, and in response to the expressions of concern by petitioners and elected officials from Non-Self-Governing Territories in the region regarding inadequate relief efforts in those Territories, he proposed that the Committee should postpone the adoption of draft resolution II under agenda item 59 in order to add language that called for additional support for Non-Self-Governing Territories affected by natural disasters.

21. *It was so decided*

22. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on the draft resolutions before it under agenda items 58, 59, 60, 61 and 62, none of which had any programme budget implications.

Draft resolution I: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations, submitted under agenda item 58 (A/72/23 (chap. XIII))

23. *A recorded vote was taken at the request of the United Kingdom.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia,

Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

24. *Draft resolution I was adopted by 153 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.*

25. **Ms. Hourmouzios** (United Kingdom) said that, as in previous years, the United Kingdom abstained in the vote on the draft resolution. Her Government did not take issue with its main objective, which was to seek compliance with Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations, and would continue to meet its own obligations fully in that regard in respect of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. It believed, however, that the decision as to whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory had reached a level of self-government sufficient to relieve the administering Power of the obligation to submit information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter ultimately fell to the government of the Territory and the administering Power concerned, and not to the General Assembly.

Draft resolution III. Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations, submitted under agenda item 60 (A/72/23 (chap. XIII))

26. *A recorded vote was taken at the request of the United Kingdom.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

27. *Draft resolution III was adopted by 104 votes to 2, with 50 abstentions.*

28. **Ms. Hourmouzios** (United Kingdom) said that although her Government supported the specialized agencies and their efforts to provide assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories in the humanitarian, educational and technical fields in particular, the statutes of those agencies should be carefully respected. For that reason, her delegation had abstained during the voting.

29. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) said that he had voted in favour of the resolution on the understanding that it would be implemented in accordance with the relevant

resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and Special Committee on decolonization.

Draft resolution A/C.4/72/L.6: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories, submitted under agenda item 61

30. **The Chair** announced that Argentina, Cuba, Eritrea, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Singapore had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

31. **Mr Rivero Rosario** (Cuba) said it was surprising that, out of 193 Member States, only nine had reported offering scholarships or training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Rather than investing in areas such as militarization, all States, especially administering Powers, should offer greater support to the development of such populations.

32. Despite the criminal and unjust trade blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States, Cuba was making great efforts to contribute such support. It was currently hosting 122 students from Western Sahara and had awarded 43 scholarships to students from that Territory for the 2017 academic year. Thus far, over 2,500 students from Anguilla, Bermuda, Montserrat and, most of all, Western Sahara had studied in Cuba.

33. *Draft resolution* A/C.4/72/L.6 *was adopted*

Draft resolution A/C.4/72/L.5: Question of Western Sahara, submitted under agenda item 62

34. **Ms. Lind** (Estonia), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the country of the stabilization and association process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union and its member States looked forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus. They welcomed the commitment of the Secretary-General to relaunch the negotiating process with the aim of achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter. They encouraged the parties to work within the United Nations framework and supported the meaningful participation of women in the political process. They stood ready to support the efforts of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara in his efforts to consult with the parties and neighbouring States who, in turn, should cooperate with him to advance towards a more intensive phase of negotiations, in good faith and without preconditions, as advocated by the many Security Council resolutions.

35. The agreement reached between the United Nations and Morocco allowing MINURSO to return to full functionality was a welcome development, and the parties were encouraged to cooperate with the Mission. They should also work more closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on confidence-building measures which would help improve the political climate. UNHCR should also, at the urging of the Security Council, continue to consider the registration of refugees in the Tindouf camps. The living conditions in those camps were deeply concerning and it was imperative that that the international community should provide new and additional voluntary contributions.

36. Lastly, the consequences of the Western Sahara conflict on security and cooperation in the region continued to be of concern.

37. *Draft resolution* A/C.4/72/L.5 *was adopted*

38. **Ms. Hourmouzios** (United Kingdom), speaking in explanation of position before the decisions, said that her Government would join the consensus on the eight draft resolutions concerning British Overseas Territories submitted under agenda item 62 in order to demonstrate its full support for the right to self-determination, even though some of the language in the draft resolutions was unacceptable. Unfortunately, the Special Committee had failed once again to take into account the positive evolution of the relationship between the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories. The latter enjoyed a large measure of internal self-government and had all freely chosen to maintain their links to the United Kingdom. The draft resolutions failed to reflect that modern relationship, which was based on partnership, shared values and the right to self-determination.

Draft resolution A/C.4/72/L.7: Question of Gibraltar, submitted under agenda item 62

39. *Draft resolution* A/C.4/72/L.7 *was adopted*

Draft resolution IV: Question of American Samoa, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

40. *Draft resolution IV was adopted*

Draft resolution V: Question of Anguilla, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

41. *Draft resolution V was adopted*

Draft resolution VI: Question of Bermuda, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

42. *Draft resolution VI was adopted.*

Draft resolution VII: Question of the British Virgin Islands, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

43. *Draft resolution VII was adopted.*

Draft resolution VIII: Question of the Cayman Islands, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

44. *Draft resolution VIII was adopted.*

Draft resolution IX: Question of French Polynesia, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

45. *Draft resolution IX was adopted.*

Draft resolution XI: Question of Monserrat, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

46. *Draft resolution XI was adopted.*

Draft resolution XIII: Question of Pitcairn, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

47. *Draft resolution XIII was adopted.*

Draft resolution XIV: Question of Saint Helena, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

48. *Draft resolution XIV was adopted.*

Draft resolution XV: Question of Tokelau, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

49. *Draft resolution XV was adopted.*

Draft resolution XVI: Question of the Turks and Caicos Islands, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

50. *Draft resolution XVI was adopted.*

Draft resolution XVII: Question of the United States Virgin Islands, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

51. *Draft resolution XVII was adopted.*

52. **The Chair** said that whereas in the past, the Committee had voted on a single resolution for all the Non-Self-Governing Territories, two years prior it had switched to voting on each Territorial resolution on case-by-case basis, which was a fairer if marginally more cumbersome procedure. The Committee had consequently postponed voting on the resolutions pertaining to New Caledonia and Guam in order to reflect concerns that had been expressed during the debate on the texts.

Draft resolution XVIII: Dissemination of Information on Decolonization, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

53. A recorded vote was taken at the request of the United Kingdom.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, Rwanda, Togo.

54. *Draft resolution XVIII was adopted by 150 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions.*

55. **Ms. Hourmouzios** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation had voted against the resolution. The obligation it placed on the Secretariat to publicize decolonization issues represented an unwarranted drain on United Nations resources and was therefore unacceptable.

56. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) said that he had voted in favour of the resolution on the understanding that it would be interpreted and implemented in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions. The General Assembly and the Special Committee expressly referred to the question of the Malvinas Islands as a special situation involving a sovereignty dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina. That dispute should be resolved urgently through a just, peaceful and lasting negotiated settlement that took into account the interests of the populations of the islands.

Draft resolution XIX: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Peoples and Countries, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

57. **Mr. Ashby** (Australia) said that despite having consistently voted in favour of the resolution in the past, his delegation would now regretfully vote against the resolution as it could not accept paragraph 14 calling upon the administering Powers to terminate military activities and eliminate military bases. Australia recognized the sovereign rights of Member States to defend the Territories that they administered, which was often in the interest of the peoples of those Territories and the broader region. In the Pacific region alone, France, Australia and New Zealand coordinated humanitarian and disaster response through the FRANZ arrangement, which involved the participation of forces based in French Polynesia and New Caledonia; the same forces also combatted illegal fishing and transnational crime. His delegation therefore called for the unnecessary language of paragraph 14 to be removed from future resolutions.

58. *A recorded vote was taken at the request of the United Kingdom.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Israel, Morocco, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo.

59. *Draft resolution XIX was adopted by 107 votes to 7, with 40 abstentions.*

60. **Ms. Hourmouzios** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation continued to find some elements of the resolution unacceptable and had therefore voted against it once more. It nonetheless remained committed to modernizing its relationship with its Overseas Territories while fully taking into account the views of the people of those Territories.

61. **Ms. Pedros Carretero** (Spain) said that although her delegation had abstained, it fully supported the right

to self-determination. In cases involving a sovereignty dispute such as Gibraltar, however, the principle of territorial integrity applied, and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), paragraph 6, and General Assembly resolution 2353 (XXII) should be taken into account. Visiting missions could be dispatched only to Territories where the right to self-determination was at stake and only with General Assembly approval, which was indeed the practice followed by the Special Committee.

62. **Mr. Marzeo** (Argentina) said that visiting missions could be sent only to Territories to which the right to self-determination applied, meaning Territories where there was no dispute over sovereignty. That requirement was fully in line with General Assembly resolution 850 (IX), which had also established the requirement that any visiting mission must be approved by the General Assembly. It was also in line with the doctrine of the Special Committee, as evidenced in its regional seminars and declarations that visiting missions must be sent on a case-by-case basis and carried out in compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

63. **Ms. Boels** (Belgium) said that despite its strong support for self-determination, Belgium had abstained on account of the language contained in paragraph 14. The call to eliminate all military activities, without distinction, did not take into account military activities that were for the benefit of the Territories, such as following natural disasters.

64. **The Chair**, expressing appreciation for the efforts of all Committee members, delegations and petitioners, said that 19 draft resolutions had been adopted. In addition, 117 petitioners had been heard and 80 countries had participated in the general debate. The 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories expected much of the United Nations, which offered the hope that territorial and sovereignty disputes could be resolved through diplomacy.

65. **Mr. Kendrick** (United States of America) said that his delegation reiterated its concern that the resolutions placed too much weight on independence as a one-size-fits-all status option for Territories in pursuit of self-determination. As had been established in General Assembly resolution 2625, Territories could validly opt for free association as an alternative to independence or any other political status, including integration with the administrating State, provided that status was freely determined by the people. The United Nations must therefore not seek to influence the outcome of various decolonization processes, but rather respect the free will of the people.

66. His delegation expressed dismay at the outdated call to terminate all military activities and eliminate all military bases in Non-Self-Governing Territories contained in paragraph 14. The United States had a sovereign right to carry out military activities in accordance with its national security interests and it was facile to assume that such activities were harmful or incompatible with the wishes of the people.

67. The right to self-determination of a Non-Self-Governing Territory must be exercised by all the people in a given Territory, not just a segment of the population. All self-determination decisions should be carried out in accordance with applicable human rights commitments, upholding the principles of non-discrimination and universal and equal suffrage as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

68. In regard to draft resolution XVIII, his delegation observed that it was for an administering State to determine if self-governance had been achieved in one of its Territories under the terms of the Charter, and consequently whether to transmit information concerning that Territory under Article 73(e). His delegation stressed that the statements made in the current and previous resolutions were non-binding and did not necessarily reflect conventional or customary international law. Any reaffirmation of prior documents contained in the resolutions applied only to those States that had affirmed them initially.

69. **The Chair** said that it should be recalled that France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States were the only administering Powers with colonies left.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.